

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

VOL. XXXI. No. 11.] LONDON, SATURDAY, SEPT. 14, 1816. [Price 1s.  $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

321]

322

## TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

*On the conduct of the English Board of  
Agriculture.*

Those who are skilled in the disorders of the human body tell us, that, in certain cases every species of nutriment, which is swallowed, turns either to gall, to bile, to rottenness, or to something or another which only tends to strengthen the disorder. The same appears to be the case with the body politic in England. Institutions and establishments, the natural tendency of which must be to produce good in ordinary cases, do, in our case, generally, if not always, produce mischief. One would imagine, that a Board, established for the professed purpose of receiving and distributing information upon the subject of agriculture, could not possibly have any tendency, contrary to the public good. Nevertheless, I am thoroughly convinced that the Board of Agriculture in England has done more injury to the country than all its gaming houses and all its stews put together.

The truth is, that this Board, which was established first by Pitt, was intended to be a political engine, which it has now, as I shall by and bye shew, proved itself to be. It has cost the country not less

than a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Its President and Secretary are appointed by the minister; and be it always remembered, that Mr. Arthur Young, who had first written a book fully justifying even the violences of the French Revolution, afterwards wrote a book reprobating every part of that revolution; and that then it was that he was made Secretary to this Board of Agriculture. Mr. Young might change his opinion without blame; but it was unfortunate for Mr. Young, that he obtained a place of five hundred pounds a year immediately upon this change of opinion in favour not only of monarchy but of *despotism*; and that the change was such any man may satisfy himself by referring to the *Travels in France and Italy*, and to the subsequent work called, *The Example of France a warning to Britain*. The baseness of this change has been most ably and most eloquently pourtrayed by Major Cartwright, and it is no small credit to the nerves of Mr. Young, that he was able to exist with that portrait before him. As far as talents go, Mr. Young is an honour to his country; but he has done a great deal of mischief since he has become a stipendiary of the government.

The President of this Board of Agriculture is, I believe, still Sir John Sinclair, who, under Perceval, was made Collector General for Scotland, and who is, perhaps, one of the most completely servile courtiers that ever was born

even on the North side of the Tweed. There are always a great number of persons ambitious of *distinction*, in one way or another. When men obtain riches, they always want something more. They want to be distinguished above their fellows; and in a country like this, where a prattling and gossiping gang of newspapers are continually vending their columns to those who are willing to pay for the indulgence of their vanity, there are a great number of persons, who, destitute of talent necessary to *force* them upon the notice of the public, are everlastingly upon the hunt after something or another which is likely to *bring their names into print*. They are not nice in their choice of the means. They seem to care little about the character in which they appear. The desire is to appear in some way or another. Whether as promoters of Bible Societies; Sunday Schools; Magdalén Societies; Lying-in Societies; Bell or Lancaster Societies; Friendly Societies; Scotch or Irish Societies; Christian knowledge Societies; and scores of others which I cannot recollect. These gentlemen are taken with that disorder of the mind, which the French very expressively denominate, the *besoin de faire parler de soi*, or, the *need of making oneself talked of*, a malady which seems to have taken particular hold of our agricultural gentlemen, numbers of whom are constantly seeking to get their names squeezed, it matters little how, into treatises and reports. They figure away at Sheep-Shearings, where they make speeches wonderfully nonsensical. They do the same at Cattle-Shews, Wool-Fairs, and the like. If they confine themselves to topics merely

agricultural, they say little more than could be said by any of their tenants or bailiffs, and they seldom say it in much better style; and if they go but one single inch out of that track; if they wander into one single idea bordering upon questions of political economy, it is like the cobler's going beyond his last.

The government, which yields to no one upon earth, not even to that of the Pope and his Cardinals, in point of *cunning*, laid, in the establishment of a board of agriculture, a trap wherein to catch all these fame-seeking gulls. This board is the grand centre of their communications. They write letters to *the Board*. The Board answers them, and, as circumstances may make it meet, the Board praises them. Gives them medals sometimes. Records their letters in its proceedings. Puts them into print. The correspondents themselves frequently publish these letters that they receive from the Board. Together with their own letters; and thus the *besoin de faire parler de soi* is gratified, very frequently at the expence of truth and common sense. Nevertheless, as you may easily perceive, the thing is a *political machine*, and that it tends naturally to give influence to the government.

I do not know that you will excuse me for it, but I cannot refrain from giving you one specimen of the proceedings of this Board, from which the farmers in your country in particular will be able to judge of its merits as an agricultural institution. There is a gentleman, whose name is **GREG**; who is, I believe, a great and opulent merchant in the city of London, and, as I have been informed, a very

worthy man. This gentleman has a farm and country seat in Hertfordshire, where he carries on the cultivation of a considerable tract of land himself. About seven years ago he made to the Board of Agriculture a communication respecting his mode of farming; for which communication he received the *thanks of the Board*, and the Board published his account for the information of the people. You will observe here, that this publication must have been made at the *public expense*. But, this was not the worst of it; for, it was fairly to be inferred, indeed the conclusion was inevitable, that the Board sent forth this plan as something to be useful to the country, and of course, as something to be *imitated*; as a plan to be adopted and followed by other cultivators; and I will venture to say, that if it had been at once adopted and followed generally throughout England, more than one half of the population of England would, before this time, have been starved to death. I mean to use no figure of rhetoric here; I mean to say, that one half of the population must have literally died with hunger.

The principle, upon which Mr. GREG proceeded was this; that the fruitfulness of the earth was exhausted in a certain degree every time the earth was turned up by the plough or other instrument, and thereby exposed to the operations and influences of the atmosphere! Strange as this may seem I assert it to be a fact; I mean a fact, that this was Mr. GREG's principle; for that the principle is wholly false, "all nature cries aloud through all "her works." Mr. GREG's plan was,

too, said to be applicable particularly to *stiff* lands. That any thing so monstrous should ever have been put upon paper, can hardly be accounted for even from the great powers attributed to a love of singularity and a desire to make oneself talked of and to see one's name in print; but that a Board of Agriculture; a public Board established by the government, and having Mr. Arthur Young for its Secretary; that such a body should have promulgated, for the adoption of the people, such a principle as this is really astonishing, whatever allowance we may be disposed to make for the influence of politics and of wealth.

I will venture to assert, that there is no man who has any knowledge of Chemistry worth speaking of, who will not say that this principle is false. I will venture to assert, that Mr. Young and the Board have in their possession more than a thousand *proofs* of the falsehood of this principle. I will venture to assert, that there is not one skilful farmer in England, who will not say, that his experience has proved it to be false. After reading the work of TULL, it is impossible for any man to doubt of the falsehood of this principle. The falsehood of it must be as clear as day light to any person who observes what takes place every week in his own garden. There is no man, as far as I have observed, who has written upon the subject either in France or in England, who does not contend for the contrary principle; and if there had been no other book upon the subject, that of MR. CURWEN would be quite sufficient, though I cannot help noticing here MR. CURWEN's

attributing to Bishop Watson the possession of knowledge which had been communicated to him long and long before by the much more ingenuous, much more learned and much more disinterested TULL, who was the father of the drill husbandry in Europe, and who laid the foundation of all those improvements which have tended to give such large masses of produce and such great resources and power to this country.

But, with regard to this outrageous principle of MR. GREG, I am able to speak with more certainty than most people, having actually performed a sort of pilgrimage into Hertfordshire for the purpose of seeing with my own eyes whether such a monstrous principle could possibly be productive of beneficial effects. I was deeply interested in the enquiry. I had just come out of that prison, into which I had been put for two years with a thousand pounds of fine upon my head for having written too freely about the flogging of English local militia men, at the Town of Ely, under the superintendance of Hanoverian Dragoons; and, hoping to be able to escape a similar punishment for cultivating my land, I was desirous of seeing, whether the wonders related by Mr. Greg were real or imaginary; or, at least, of seeing whether the thing had about it the smallest probability of truth. It was in the month of October very late, or in the first week of November, that I did myself the pleasure of waiting upon Mr. Greg, whom, in point of hospitality I found to be a very good country gentleman. The corn was in the barns and ricks, and, therefore, I could see nothing

of the produce in that respect. But Mr. Greg had boasted of the efficacy of his system as applicable to root crops also. His *Turnips* were in full growth; or, rather, they were arrived nearly at maturity; and, added to his great principle of non-disturbance of the earth, Mr. Greg had published an account of an infallible remedy for the *fly*, which is known to be the great enemy of the turnip plant when young. In this respect, therefore, I had a right to expect something very perfect. But, upon very few farms, as I went along the road, did I see a crop so imperfect as that of Mr. Greg. The white turnips had not a weight of ten ton to an acre. Indeed, there were in several parts of the fields, whole perches together where there were no turnips at all. The *Swedish Turnips*, as being a plant of much greater value, was, however, the important article. The field which contained them I judged to be of about twelve acres, and it appeared to be very good land. Now, then, said I to myself, I shall see, whether what Mr. Greg says be true, and whether Jethro Tull has been teaching me falsehood and nonsense. Upon the principle of old Jethro I had left some pieces of turnips at home; and I assert in the most positive manner that I left at home, upon three acres and a half of land, a greater weight of Swedish turnips than I found standing upon the twelve acres of Mr. Greg! I do not believe that Mr. Greg had any thing like eight ton of bulbs upon an acre; and upon the three acres and a half that I have mentioned there were a hundred and seventeen ton of bulbs, the leaves and the fibres having been first cut off. But Mr. Greg's cultivation in this re-



spect appeared to me to be greatly inferior to what I saw upon the neighbouring farms, on which the old broad cast method was practised. I asked him to be so good as to shew me his *mangel wurzle*, which he told me was excellent for cows. I had left at home, cultivated in the Tullian way, about fifty tons to an acre, some of the roots of which weighed upwards of twenty pounds each. Mr. Greg had no mangle wurzle to shew me; but he gratified me as far as lay in his power; that is to say, he shewed me the piece of ground, in which he had intended to have some. It had *failed* he told me. *Failed*, said I to myself! Old Jethro never *fails*. The truth is, I suppose, that the seed had been sown after some of Mr. Greg's *scratchings*, as Tull calls them; and that the seed, which is very delicate in its choice of mould, had perished, or, rather, had lain quiet in the earth, waiting for three or four tumbles, in order to vegetate, part one year and part another year, as it should be brought sufficiently near to the surface during the genial seasons of the year. For if you sow this seed upon hard ground, or amongst clods of earth, it will not vegetate. It will go down with the plough or the spade. It will lie under grass or corn year after year, if a few inches beneath the surface, and it will spring up the next year if accidentally brought near the top at a proper season of the year. I have had it come up after lying in the ground five years. The same remark applies to almost all seeds. I had turnip seed, for instance, ripen and scatter itself about the ground last summer. The ground was ploughed up and sown with rye last fall. No turnips came up amongst the rye. The rye was fed off with sheep. The ground was ploughed up in June, and sown with buck-wheat; and, now, it is hard to say

which is the most abundant in plants, the turnips or the buck-wheat; and what is very curious, upon one particular land of the field, which land the seedsman missed in sowing the buck-wheat, the turnips are four times as thickly set as they are in any other part of the field. I saved some parsnip seed in the year 1812. The ground was dug very deep after the seed came off in the fall. It was dug again in the spring for the purpose of receiving some other vegetable; but an abundance of parsnips came up; and as the ground has been dug every spring since, it has always been well set with parsnips; though it is very well known, that parsnip seed, if kept out of ground, is good for nothing after the first year. If Mr. Greg, therefore, had sown his mangle wurzle seed in finely broken ground, which had been moved sufficiently deep to have had an active communication with the atmosphere, his crop would not have *failed*, as I can assure him that the seed of that plant (being surrounded with a *pod*) will, if kept in the dry, grow perfectly well at the end of ten years of age.

But, Mr. Greg did not at the time when I had the honour to visit him act upon his own system even *himself!* This amounts to something like a *charge* against that gentleman; but it is nevertheless true; and though I do not accuse him of insincerity, it is nevertheless proper that I should state what I know upon this subject, to do which, too, I feel myself the more strongly urged by Mr. Greg's having *very recently*, at the sheep-shearing of Mr. Coke, most positively insisted on the efficacy of his anti-tullian system, even to the sowing of turnips without a single ploughing, upon land where wheat has grown the year before! Why, if this be

proper; if there be reason; if there be common sense in this; all former experience; all the principles, all the notions, upon which we have hitherto acted in the cultivation of this sort of crop are ridiculous; and my neighbours, who are some of the most skilful farmers in England, and the farms of one of whom in particular are more like beautiful gardens than like what we have hitherto called farms; all that these men have hitherto thought upon these matters is, the excess of foolishness, and nine tenths of what they do in order to obtain crops of turnips amounts to nothing short of time and labour thrown away. But, it is not so. These neat and skilful farmers are not fools. They do not throw their money away. They grow large and beautiful crops; they have grown in riches, too; and they have had this advantage over Mr. Greg; that, in the making up of their accounts, or rather, in taking, at different periods, the dimensions of their purses, they can have been in no danger of confounding the proceeds of their farms with the proceeds of the counting-house! Mr. Greg grows rich, too, I dare say, and much faster than they do; but as there are *two streams* by which his purse is fed, it would not be at all surprising, if he were not to perceive every little occasion, when the stream of Broad Street overflowed, and thereby gave a swell to the stream of Hertfordshire, making it surpass in productiveness the lands of his neighbours, and making it surpass, as, indeed, he alleges it to have done, the productiveness of his own identical lands, while they were under the occupation of their former cultivator, who, most likely, was not blest with a fertilising stream flowing from Broad Street. Mr. Greg says in the book which the Board of Agriculture has put the country to

the expence of promulgating, a great deal upon this subject, I do not mean to insinuate, that Mr. Greg *grudged this expence himself*. No, no! That is not the point. Mr. Greg guessed pretty shrewdly, that if he published the book, the thing would have been blown upon. He himself would have been a mere *author*. That was not what he wanted. He wanted the *Board* to publish his book. That was what he was driving at. I do not blame Mr. Greg. Vanity is no fault as far as I know; and if a man having a good deal of money, cannot make himself talked of in one way, he is justified as far as I know, in making himself talked of in any other way, provided he does no injury to his neighbour, or to the public, and of any such intention I most sincerely acquit Mr. Greg, whose cold roast beef was at my service, and would, I dare say, have been at the service of any man in the kingdom, who would have called upon him to talk about farming. But, the *Board*; the *Board of Agriculture*. This is a public establishment. Into its deeds we have a right to enquire. What it sends forth becomes a legitimate subject of our animadversion; and I have only cited Mr. Greg's work, as promulgated by this Board, as one out of a thousand and another thousand instances of the worse than uselessness of the establishment.

I have said that Mr. Greg himself did not act upon his own system. A part of that system is to sow wheat after *peas* and after *beans* without any ploughing at all. He says, that the wheat thrives the better for the land not being ploughed after the peas and the beans. He gives detailed directions for pulling up the rods of the beans. Then for scratching the ground over and sowing the

wheat. It is very true, that wheat delights in land that lies *solid*; but, it has always shewn its gratitude for every ploughing which *stubborn* land has received previous to the sowing. In this general principle of land lying close and heavy about the seed of wheat, Mr. Greg's notion seems to have originated; but in land which is naturally heavy, and close in its texture, all that you have to do is, as old Jethro says, to *plough dry*, and *sow wet*, and you will have it as heavy and as close as any wheat, and almost as any brick maker can wish it. But, it is of the *fact* that I am now speaking; and I assert, that I saw a field upon Mr. Greg's farm which had been sowed with peas the year before, just then sown with wheat, and that *the land had been ploughed to receive the wheat*. I assert also, that I saw upon the same farm a field from which beans had recently been carried; that Mr. Greg told me that it was going to be sown with wheat; and that this field *had been begun to be ploughed*. I further assert that I saw no field which had borne beans or peas and which had not been ploughed. Here, therefore, there was a complete departure from the system by Mr. Greg himself. What then are we to think of the Board of Agriculture, who could send forth a publication like that of Mr. Greg without any proof, without any verification, and in direct contradiction to all the settled principles adopted by the most skilful cultivators.

I do not believe that there is any one thing that this Board has ever done which has been in the smallest degree beneficial to the public, while I have here shewn, that, even in a mere Agricultural point of view, it has been mischievous. I do not suppose that Mr. Greg has any Borough interest; but I

know very well that he has the means of giving good dinners; and do not think that I should be very wrong if I were to ascribe his celebrity as an Agricultural writer, much more to his Claret and Burgundy than to any opinion that any one sincerely entertains of his mode of augmenting the produce of the earth.

I have gone into this detail with a view of guarding the people of England, as well as the people of America, against reposing a false confidence in this Board of Agriculture. In your country, though you all profess to be upon your guard, you are not upon your guard against many parts of the system of our government. Who would imagine that there could be any thing political, any thing partial, any thing designing, any thing underhanded, in an establishment which has the name and all the outward appearances appertaining to the cultivation of the earth! Yet, as there is not a sparrow falls to the ground, we are told, without being counted; and as every hair of our heads is accurately registered; so, you may be well assured that there is no body of men, down to the very chimney-sweepers and gipsies, in this kingdom, upon which this watchful and crafty government has not its eye, and over which it does not endeavour to maintain a powerful and constant influence. It is no matter of what description any part of society may be. It has it's eye upon all. All the sects of religion; all the divisions of trade, commerce, agriculture. All the sports. Every thing and every body high and low it endeavours to wheedle and to get within it's grasp. It proceeds in the way of blandishment and seduction till these be found unavailing; and then it proceeds by force. If false humanity, if fanaticism, if charity, real or

pretended, if zeal, well or ill directed; if any of these obtain a credit and a party too powerful to be subdued without exciting great hatred against the subjugating power, then the schemes of the visionaries are adopted, and the government becomes the patron of the popular folly.

I am at once exceedingly amused and provoked to see you adopting with the most eager haste almost the whole of the ridiculous projects, which thus obtain credit and currency with us; and to hear you at the same time treat with a mixture of contempt and indignation the idea that England is still your *mother country*. While you are using this phrase in burlesque, you are by your acts justifying its serious application. I have been endeavouring in vain to discover amongst the projects of your country any thing like novelty. You follow all projectors as implicitly as if they were your lawgivers. Those projects that form here the subject of ridicule and contempt with a considerable portion of the people, are when adopted in your country, too sacred to be spoken of lightly. Let a supreme folly start forth in England, and you swallow it like mother's milk. What is exceedingly amusing too, is, that when you adopt the project, you are sure to cry up the projectors as some of the most meritorious of men, when it is notorious here that they are either fanatics or knaves. While this is the case you may affect to laugh at the notion of England being your *mother country*, but she is so in reality, and not at all the less so, because she, like other mothers, leads you into her bad habits without making use of force.

I dare say that there are hundreds of persons in America, who are in corre-

pondence with this Board of Agriculture, and who think themselves *honoured* by the distinction! A Gentleman, writing to me some time ago, and wishing to pronounce an eulogium on the agricultural pursuits of General DEARBORN, called him, "*The Sir John Sinclair of America*." I brought my reflection and my reason to my assistance, or General Dearborn would have sunk a great number of degrees in my estimation. If such a phrase had found its way into print in England, it would have caused laughter without end. But, when one reflects, that the press of England is such a circulator of falsehood; such a base and corrupt channel of information; such a perverter of every thing that it touches, one can hardly wonder, that you have known no more of England than you have known of what is passing in the moon. It is all a sham from beginning to end. I have before fully laid before you the secret history of the *Reviews*, Magazines, political pamphlets and news-papers. I have placed all the prostituted herd naked in your sight. My ambassadors inform me that the people of America appeared to be awakened from a dream; that, before, they used to ask what the *Reviewers* had *said* of such or such a book; but that they now begin to cease to ask any such stupid questions. It shall not be my fault if you are not made as fully acquainted with all the other branches of deception, by which you have so long been imposed on.

To return to the Board of Agriculture, in particular, I must first observe, that I have insensibly been led wholly astray from the subject that I had in my eye at

the outset, though, perhaps, the matter already dwelt on will serve as a useful introduction to that which is to follow.— This Board has lately been occupied in collecting information from all parts of the kingdom upon the subject of the *distresses of the people*, especially that part of the people, who are engaged in agricultural pursuits. The Board, which has a regular correspondence all over the kingdom, has sent to its several correspondents *a set of questions* to be answered by them respectively. The answers have been received. The whole has been formed into a book. The book has been *printed*, and has been *suppressed*; that is to say, it has been kept from circulation; and it has been notified, that if any one should obtain a copy, and should print the book, a *prohibition from the Court of Chancery* will be issued to put a stop to the sale of it! What think ye of this for a board of *agriculture*? What think ye of this for a Board, instituted for the professed object of assisting the cultivators of the soil in the acquiring of skill in their profession! A *prohibition from the Court of Chancery* to prevent the promulgation of information received by this Board, is, perhaps, the most impudent thing, that ever was proposed to be done, even by any board in this country, very few Boards belonging to which are famed for their modesty. Before I proceed any further, however, I will here insert an article, published by the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, who appears to have seen a copy of this book, and to have had it a short time in his possession. If I can obtain a copy, it shall go off to America forthwith; for in this book, unless I am much deceived, you

will see proofs of the tendency of such a government as we live under, that will be extremely useful to you, and that none even of your Cossacks will attempt to call in question.

“ Our readers, doubtless, remember the “ judicious queries lately circulated by “ the Board of Agriculture, with a view “ to ascertain the true state of the “ country, and the officially compiled “ summaries of the answers, for the “ information of Parliament. Since that “ time, the Directors of the Board, for “ the more complete information, at “ least, of their own associates, have “ printed the substance of every an- “ swer in an octavo volume of 412 “ pages, under the title of “ *Agricultural “ State of the Kingdom in February, “ March, and April, 1816, being the sub- “ stance of the Replies to a Circular “ Letter, &c. printed for the use of the “ Members of the Board, and not for “ sale.*” In the month of July this curi- “ ous volume was completed at press; “ but, after twenty copies had been issued, “ the further circulation was suddenly “ stopt, and, without the command of “ Parliament, it is supposed, no others “ will be delivered. As we have, how- “ ever, had one of the copies in our pos- “ session, we judge it proper to give a “ brief account of it, for the information “ of our readers, particularly as increased “ curiosity will, doubtless, be felt in re- “ gard to the contents of a book which “ has been so mysteriously suppressed “ The whole is divided into counties, and “ to each a tabular summary of the re- “ sults is prefixed. Those correspond-

"ents, whose information occupies the  
"most considerable space, and whose  
"communications are marked by the  
"most active intelligence, and some-  
"times by considerable mental independ-  
"ence, are Dr. Macqueen, of Bedford-  
"shire; the Rev. Joseph Scott, Sir George  
"Leeds, Mr. John Mortlock, and Mr. J.  
"Wing, of Cambridgeshire; Mr. George  
"Wilbraham, of Cheshire; Mr. Edward  
"Baynes and Mr. J. T. Austin, of Corn-  
"wall; Mr. R. Hawkins, and Mr. Taylor,  
"of Newton Abbot, in Devonshire; Mr.  
"Miles Bowker, of Dorsetshire; Mr. T.  
"Collingwood, of Durham; Mr. John  
"Vaizey, of Essex; the Rev. J. Willis,  
"and Mr. W. Mitford, Hants; Mr. Edm.  
"Jones, of Herefordshire; Mr. Quintin,  
"and the Rev. Mr. Maltby, of Hunting-  
"donshire; Mr. R. W. Forbes, Mr. —  
"Corlinge, and Sir H. Oxenden, of Kent;  
"Mr. W. Whiteside, of Lancashire; Mr.  
"J. Buckley, of Leicestershire; Mr. D.  
"Hebb, Mr. T. Pittry, and Mr. R. Bar-  
"ker, of Lincolnshire; Mr. J. H. Mog-  
"ridge, of Monmouthshire; Mr. S. Tay-  
"lor, Mr. Wyerley Birch, Mr. John  
"Wright, Mr. John Mozley, of Norfolk;  
"Mr. Edward Martin, and Sir R. Brooke,  
"of Northamptonshire; Mr. James Fen-  
"wick, Mr. George Hopper, and Mr. M.  
"Culley, of Northumberland; the Rev.  
"A. Yule; Mr. W. J. Calvert, of Not-  
"tinghamshire; Mr. Thomas Coburn, of  
"Oxfordshire; Mr. John Wright, of Rut-  
"land; Mr. R. Locke, Mr. T. Abraham,  
"the Rev. G. Swaine, and Mr. John  
"Hope, of Somersetshire; Mr. R. H.  
"Wyatt, of Staffordshire; Mr. John  
"Thompson, the Rev. Thomas Fenton,  
"Mr. D. Simpson, Mr. Thos. Archer, and  
"Mr. Ed. Gwilt, of Suffolk; Mr. Thos.  
"Page, and Mr. Jos. Pennington, of Sur-  
"rey; Mr. John Wedge, of Warwick-  
"shire; Mr. John Gale, and Mr. Thomas  
"Davis, of Wiltshire; Mr. J. Carpenter,  
"of Worcestershire; and Sir W. Strict-

"land, Mr. W. Payne, and Messrs. Ives,  
"son, of Yorkshire. In Wales, the chief  
"correspondents are Mr. Walter Davis, of  
"Welshpool; Mr. S. Lloyd, of Bala; Mr.  
"Thomas Gough, of Swansea; and the  
"Rev. D. Williams, of Lampeter. In  
"Scotland, the principal are Mr. R.  
"Brown, of East Lothian; Mr. W. Young,  
"Durmotter; Mr. W. Stewart, of Dum-  
"frieshire; Mr. John Tennant, of Ayr-  
"shire; Mr. D. Macleod, of Rossire;  
"and Mr. John Patrick, of Carse of Gow-  
"rie. The portraits drawn by these gen-  
"tlemen of the general state of landlords,  
"farmers, and landowners, are deplorable,  
"except in the hop districts of Kent. The  
"remedies universally recommended as  
"essential to the salvation of the agricul-  
"tural interest, are an abatement of taxes  
"and tythes; and several correspondents  
"consider it indispensably necessary to  
"dispense with the sinking fund. We have  
"selected a few facts, gleaned in a cursory  
"perusal of the volume; but we do not  
"affect to give any general analysis of the  
"interesting contents.

"P. 53.—The Cornwall Society com-  
"plain, that the *fundholders are protected*  
"at the cost of the landed interest.

"P. 61.—Dr. Coke thinks the farmers  
"have over-ploughed; and says, many  
"of them sell off and run away. *The land*  
"is going rapidly out of cultivation, and  
"the farmer must have a premium from  
"the public to enable him to manure.

"P. 113.—Mr. G. Maxwell says, the  
"country banks have done all the mis-  
"chief, by enabling the farmers to spe-  
"culate.

"P. 124.—Mr. R. W. Forbes con-  
"ceives the root of the evil to lie in ex-  
"cessive taxation. He doubts whether  
"the interests of posterity require the  
"preservation of a sinking fund of twelve  
"millions per annum, or the protection  
"of the present generation a standing

"army of 150,000 men. He predicts, "that the landed property of the kingdom, if those establishments continue, "is on the eve of changing hands to an extent beyond all former example. He "considers Saving Banks, and all such "projects, not only as *useless* at this time, "but, so far as they create a false reliance, *mischievous*.

"P. 171.—Mr. J. H. Moggridge thinks "no relief can be obtained but by general "measures. In his opinion high *rents* "and *taxes* have caused the mischief, and "they *must be reduced*.

"P. 198.—Mr. Wyerley Birch says, "he has let one farm without rent, and "another for 100*l.* instead of 800*l.* He "can find nobody to take farms offered "rent free. *At a sale under a distress for* "rent, *seventeen horses were sold for* "20*l.*

"P. 207.—Mr. T. Carr states, that "horses which, in 1813, fetched 40*l.* on "March 1, 1816, sold for 11*l.*—Sheep "33*l.* but 19*l. 5s.* per score, and other "things in proportion.

"P. 232.—Sir R. Brooke de Capell "Brooke states, that the *overseers let out* "the men to any person who bids from 2*d.* "to 8*d. per day*, the parish making up the "difference, to a single man 5*s.* to a man "and his wife 5*s.* and 2*s.* for each child "per week.

"P. 249.—Mr. W. J. Calvert gives a "similar statement; he says that the *overseer* calls a meeting on Saturday evenings where he *puts up each labourer by name to auction*, and they have been "let generally at from 1*s. 6d.* to 2*s.* per "week, and their provisions, their families being supported by the parish. He "gives other details of this shocking "system.

"P. 34. Part II.—Mr. E. Moor says, "the labourers are *billetted by the overseers upon the farmers at 6*s.* per week*, "the parish allowing for the wife 1*s.*—

"with one child 2*s.*—with two 3*s. 6d.*— "and so on."

Though we have not the book, we have here a tolerable specimen of its contents. The picture which is here drawn, very far surpasses in darkness of colouring any thing that I have ever even attempted. Here you see, in the first place, that the land is rapidly going out of cultivation; that the price of farm produce, not being articles immediately fit to eat, is fallen so low as to produce ruin to the farmer. But, the whole sum total of the misery and degradation of the people is found in the single fact, that the labourers are, for the greater part, become paupers; that they are now under the super-vision of the overseers; and that they are put up to auction by name! I would now ask my Old English friends in America, whether they any longer wonder that I should have changed my note with regard to the tendency of the English government. Did they imagine, when they and I used to sing the praises of this government, that the time would shortly come when a considerable part of the labourers of England would actually be put up to auction by the overseers of the poor? Amongst the persons thus put up to auction, there are, perhaps, many of the relations of my old English friends in America. Can they endure the reflection, that their brothers, or brother's children, are thus let out, like slaves in the marts of the West Indies? Our hireling Newspapers, in order to put a stop to emigration to America, have promulgated numerous accounts of the sufferings, as they call them, of the labourers and artizans, who have recently emigrated thither. Amongst other *proofs* of those sufferings, they produce accounts of the emigrants having been *sold* for a certain number of years. The fact is, that persons who have not money to pay the expence of their passage to America, enter into a contract with the master or owner

of the vessel to serve him, or his heirs or assigns, for a certain length of time after their arrival in America. This is a contract voluntarily entered into by the servant with a view to his own good ; and, it does not appear to me, that there is any thing more degrading in it than there is in the act of a person's becoming the *apprentice* of another person. In this case the former is firmly bound to serve and obey the latter ; and, there are generally conditions, too, to which the bond servant is not subjected ; such for instance, as an obligation not to marry, and several others, which give the master of the apprentice much greater power than is possessed by the master of the bond servant. The apprentice agrees thus to subject himself because he thereby obtains the benefit which will naturally result from the learning of his trade. And the bond servant subjects himself to the will of his master because he thereby obtains the benefit of being removed across the seas from a country where he is starving to a country where he is sure to find an abundance of food, and where, at the end of his servitude he may become, in a short time, a man of some property, if he will.

How different is the case with regard to the poor labourers in England. It is *not a voluntary act of theirs* to let themselves out to hire. They are let out without any consent of their own. They have made no contract for services. They have not received, nor are they about to receive, any benefit in exchange for their labour. The overseer lets them to whomsoever he pleases ; not only without their consent, but, perhaps, sorely against their will they are placed in his hands by the compulsion of want ; and he disposes of them to the highest bidder, not for any fixed period, at the end of which plenty and ease are to be the reward of their services ; but for periods that may be short or long, as accident may determine, and without

the smallest prospect of their lot ever being better.

I am not prepared to say, that the letting out of paupers in this way is not justifiable. Indeed, I do not very clearly see how we shall be able to avoid doing it all over the kingdom. The farmers as well as the people in trade are all so much reduced in the amount of their means, that it is impossible that pauperism should not go on increasing. It is impossible that the labourers and their families should be maintained by wages, while the taxes remain what they now are. Therefore, a reduction in the quantity of food consumed and of raiment made use of must take place in every family, not fed out of the taxes ; and of course, the labourer's family, who had before little more than the bare means of existence, must now be pared down so closely as to leave them not one single mouthful beyond what is absolutely necessary to keep them alive. Hence it is that the labourers now come in a body to be fed at the hands of the Government. For this is really the case, because the justices of the peace have the power of regulating the granting of relief, and the Government appoints the justices of the peace.

Here, then, is a scene, which is well worthy of the strictest attention of the people of America. Here they may see what it is for a country to be subjected to such a government as that of England. If indeed, there are any persons amongst you, who would delight in seeing their country reduced to such a state as England now is, such persons will act consistently in endeavouring to make your Government resemble ours in all its acts ; but unless they desire to see the former, they are very inconsistent indeed in endeavouring to bring about the latter.

In the specimen of this *new mysterious book*, which you have seen in the above

extract, you will also perceive, that those predictions, with regard to the ultimate effects of the paper system, and which predictions were so long treated with contempt, are now fully verified. The hired writers in England have been constantly labouring, for many months past, to produce a belief, first, that there was no real misery in the country; and, next, that the misery arose from mere temporary circumstances, that it was partial in point of extent, and that it would be of short duration. But, events have fought against them so boldly and so perseveringly, that they are now beaten from the whole of this ground, and content themselves with beseeching the people to believe, that the fault, does not lie at the door of the Government. The people, however, are no longer to be deceived on this head. Every man in England, who does not live upon the taxes, now feels the intolerable burden of the taxes, and there will not be wanting the means of instructing those who may yet be ignorant as to the real cause of those taxes.

It is notorious, that, previous to our war against the Republicans of France, the interest of the national debt required of us to pay only nine millions a year; and that the whole of the taxes that were collected did not exceed sixteen millions a year. It is a fact equally well known, that the interest of the national debt now requires taxes to the amount of forty-five millions a year; and that the whole of the expenses of each year will now amount to seventy millions, while the means of payment are not at the most more than one third above what they were previous to the war. These are facts not to be denied. There is no man who has any reputation to lose, who will risk it upon such a denial. You see by the extract above given, that the correspondents of the *Board of Agriculture* attribute the misery of the country to the *weight of taxation*.

This was precisely what the Government would naturally most dislike; and, therefore, the book has been *suppressed*! I should be glad to know by what authority this work has been suppressed. The printing of it was done at the public expence. The Board was established for the professed object of conveying to the people useful information. Upon what ground, then, I should be glad to know, has this suppression taken place. It is not, now that I recollect myself, Sir John Sinclair, who is the *President* of this Board; it is the *Earl of Hardwick*. The book, in its title, is said to be for the *use of the members*. What need had the members of a printed book? Why should they want a book, containing in print the very same matter which they had before them in manuscript? It is impossible that the book could have been printed with any other intention than that of being circulated; and I think you will agree with me that this circulation was prevented because the Government did not relish the contents of the book. Indeed, it might very well dislike its contents; for, from the specimen that we have seen, we may fairly conclude, that the whole forms such a body of evidence against the fiscal system as would have been extremely annoying to that system.

However, very little will, in the end, have been gained by the Government by this suppression. Men will naturally suppose, that it can have been no *good* purpose that the suppression was intended to answer, seeing that the contents were made up of letters written from all parts of the country, by persons not at all addicted to what are called disorganizing principles; but, on the contrary, by persons picked out by the Board of Agriculture, and, of course, *well-affected*, as it is called in the insolent cant of the day. These persons were called upon for answers to certain questions; they gave their

answers; and could it be a *love of truth* that produced the suppression?

You will observe that two of the Correspondents, out of the very few, any of whose words we have been able to come at, give it as their opinion, *that the estates of the land owners are making swift progress into the pockets of the fundholders!* You will remember, some of you, at any rate, that, when, many years ago, I said that this would be the case, I was abused as a *Jacobin* and a *Leveller*. I have been harping upon this string for more than ten years; and, until of late, I have been laughed at and abused for my pains. My turn to laugh is now come; and, though I suffer as much, perhaps, as any man in England, in proportion to my means, I am not only entitled to laugh, but I actually do laugh, till I am afraid I grow fat in spite of riding and walking to the amount of a good hundred miles a week. If I were to see the tax-gatherer come in and take away my horses or my ploughs, I should still laugh at the incident, because it would be a proof to me, that he was laying his paw upon great numbers of others in my line of life, and which others stand in need of this sort of discipline, to make them act in a way which is required for the well-being of their country. As to the Country Gentlemen, generally speaking, they are entitled to no pity whatever. They have never shown pity towards any one of the numerous victims of this system. On the contrary, they have, to the utmost of their capacity, given their support to every measure hostile to our rights and liberties. They have been in the front of the very forwardest in urging on the war, in calling for loans, and in justifying measures of severity against every man who wished freely to utter his sentiments, either by writing or speaking. Let them now, therefore, take the reward of their baseness. For my part, it would give me

pleasure to see them, not only without estates, but even without bread, except whatever portion might be allotted them in the shape of parish relief. They would then be taught what it was to be reduced to misery, and, perhaps, might be induced to repent of their past conduct.

As to what *will* take place in this respect, it is impossible precisely to foretel. There can be no doubt at all, that the land owners now plainly see, that they must stifle the *debt*, or that the debt will stifle them: between these parties it is truly a *war of extermination*. There is no middle course. There can be no peace between parties, to the life of one of whom the death of the other is absolutely necessary. Yet, my opinion is, that the land owners will not dare, for some time, to bring things to this issue. Besides, there are some of the land owners (and those, too, of the most powerful) who have a deep interest in upholding the funds, the funds being the very key-stone of the whole political system. It is probable, therefore, that, unless some sturdy accident should take place, the thing may drawl on, and that the fund-holders may quietly swallow up three or four fifths of the present land owners, and send ten or a dozen thousand of loyal 'Squires and their wives to inhabit snug lodgings in the out-skirts of London and of the watering places. As to their sons, the French have already knocked a good many of them in the head; the rest are Excisemen, Custom-house Officers, and the like; and their daughters will do very well for stock-brokers wives. I dare say that they curse the hour that they embarked in the service of Pitt and Dundas; but it is too late to curse now. They have ruined their country, but they have also ruined themselves.

Nevertheless, I hold it to be utterly impossible for the fund holders to continue

long to receive their interest in full. The means of paying them do not exist. It is sometimes observed, that the minister will *enforce* the collection of the taxes; that they have an army at their command. But, if we could suppose, that things would come to this pass; if we could suppose, that the soldiers would be employed here as they are in Ireland, that would not mend the matter for the fund holder: he wants money; and there is no force that will create money. The government cannot make those pay who have not the means of paying; the state of this nation is that of wretched poverty, though it has infinitely more means even now than any other country in Europe. It is poor because it owes more than it can pay, and more than can be by any means extracted from it.

You have seen, in a former Number, the grand trick which was played off, in order to make the world believe that our distresses had arisen from the mere *sudden transition from war to peace*. If the correspondents of the Board of Agriculture had been of this opinion, the book containing their letters, we should have had the work poured and puffed off upon us in every direction. But it appears, that they were of no such opinion, and that, while they drew most shocking pictures of the distresses of the people, the great cause of those distresses they thought to be the taxes. This book is one of those things which produce a striking effect. It is an official document of unquestionable veracity as far as it goes. As I observed before, the writers have been selected for their *loyalty*. The evidence which they give, is that sort of evidence which is entitled to the greatest degree of credit, because it comes from the lips of *unwilling* witnesses. There can be no doubt, that the far greater part of these correspondents would have been very glad to "prophesy smooth things;" to "prophesy lies;" but,

they were smarting so severely under the lash of taxation, that they could not wring from themselves a palatable account. Hence there grew together under their several hands a history so hideous, that the undertakers of the collection began to be frightened at the effect of their own efforts.

Here, then, we have not only made a discovery with respect to the Board of Agriculture; but we have come at sure and certain grounds whereon to proceed in the urging of our complaints. The Board of Agriculture has told us officially that the country is in the depth of misery. This point being acknowledged, we demand of the government to slacken in its exactions. But that which is of the greatest value to us all, is, the lesson which we have now received against entering into wars for the restoration of foreign despots. The late wars have been the cause of all our misery and degradation. The world will remember our exultation upon the restoration of the Bourbons, whose family, for centuries had been held in abhorrence in England, and justly held in abhorrence, as having been the most cruel and most bloody of tyrants, in every country over which they had been able to bear sway. When this present French Bourbon was first forced back upon the French people, all London was decorated in white ribbons. He was conducted amidst huzzas from London to Dover; the very horses even in distant parts of the kingdom, wore white cockades in honour of the event. What a scandalous scene! What an instance of folly as well as of baseness! We rejoiced, not because the Bourbon had regained his crown; but because we thought that five-and-twenty millions of our neighbours were re-enslaved for ever. We had been for centuries expressing our contempt of the French people because they quietly submitted to their priests, which we had for a like space of time, been representing

as the cheaters of the people; as their persecutors and robbers; and yet, when those priests were driven out of France by that very people, who, as we alledged, had been persecuted and robbed by them, we received the priests with open arms, and poured forth execrations on the people. And, what was still more serious, we were taxed with one hand for money to support the Priests, and, with the other hand, for money to make war upon the people! As a nation we may be objects of any thing but of pity. Every man in this country, who, by word or deed, knowing the merits of the case, lent his help to these deeds, merits every species of misery that the human mind or body is capable of feeling. Yes, we have the satisfaction to see that Frenchmen are again forced under the feet of the Bourbons and their Priests; and, if Frenchmen should happen to be equally malignant, they may now have the satisfaction to see that Englishmen are now put up to auction by the overseers of the poor! The French stomach must be very capacious indeed if here be not revenge sufficient to fill it. As if we were to be scourged in the severest manner and in the most appropriate way, upon this occasion, we are now actually receiving *alms* from the Bourbon family. The Duke of Berri not only subscribed his two hundred pounds in the first instance for *our relief*; but continues most generously, to give us fifty pounds *a month*, extracted no doubt from the people of France! If this be not retaliation, I know not what is. The Duke of Berri, as *grand almoner* of the people of France, doles out to us the charitable contributions of a people, whom we thought we had made beggars as well slaves.

When the kings were here, in 1814,

the Nation appeared to be drunk with joy. The pictures of those kings hung upon thousands of bosoms. The stupid and base women flocked by thousands to wave their handkerchiefs in honor of them and their whiskered attendants. Some presented them with rings, others with locks of their hair. The looks of the sons and daughters of corruption were so insolent as almost to provoke blows. Where are now those insolent looks?—Where are now those exulting grins? The Gentlemen and Ladies now begin to be frightened. They appear to smell danger. Where are now all the caresses they had to bestow upon those foreign bands! The very priests whom they so much cherished would now laugh at them. The subscription now made for the relief of this starving people does not amount to half a year's allowance which the parliament made this people pay, for years, for the *relief of French emigrants*! Nay, I believe, that the subscription will not *in the end* amount to so large a sum as that which has been voted for the relief of French emigrants *this very year*!

In taking my leave of the Board of Agriculture, or rather, of the remarks which have grown out of this notice of its conduct, I wish to caution you against being imposed upon by *names*. I have before explained to you all the history and mystery of the *Giffords* and their *Reviews*. You have now seen what the Board of Agriculture is. Thus, one at a time, fairly and softly, shall you be made fully acquainted with the whole of John Bull's concerns; and if, after that, you suffer yourselves to be duped, the fault will be yours and not mine.

Wm. COBBETT.